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NSC BRIEFING

AMERICAN AIR BASES IN MOROCCO

- I. Prospects for concluding agreement with Moroccan govt for continued use of five US air bases (4 USAF, 1 USN) seem to be diminishing.
- A. Since early 58 left wing of dominant Istiqlal party--at loggerheads with moderate Premier Balaforej (party secretary general)--has been whipping up popular agitation for total evacuation all foreign troops, including US. (Now 46,000 French, 10,500 US, 18,000 Spanish in Morocco, 16,000 Spanish in Spanish cities of *Ceuta* and *Melilla* on Moroccan coast.
1. In past month, Moroccan port workers have three times incited mobs to protest arrival of ships carrying munitions for US bases or refused to unload munitions. This tactic frequently used against French.
- B. Istiqlal left wing making strong bid to supplant Balaforej and other moderates in government. At this juncture, Balaforej unlikely to endanger his position by taking an unpopular line.
- II. King Mohamed V--personally friendly toward US and inclined to be pro-West--also maneuvering warily in face Istiqlal left wing designs to curb his power. King, however, responsive to political winds; has termed evacuation foreign troops aim of Moroccan policy.
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C. On 15 Aug, Balafrej, while expressing his doubts that provisional agreement possible under "present climate of opinion in Morocco and other Arab states" conceded reluctantly that agreement might be possible if US recognized "principle of evacuation," and made clear that US forces are only temporarily in Morocco.

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1. This first such request at governmental level for recognition of "principle of evacuation" although other officials have for some time urged [REDACTED] that declaration of intent to evacuate be made.

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D. One mildly hopeful sign is that party demagogue Allal el-Fassi--now throwing full weight into "battle for evacuation"--has hinted that if due obeisance paid to Moroccan sovereignty by recognition of "principle of evacuation" negotiation for short term use of bases might be possible.

III. We have estimated that if French agree to evacuate completely and if Balafrej and his moderate supporters can remain in power--neither condition is by any means assured--agreement for US use of bases for limited time possible. However, any Moroccan govt will be under ever-growing nationalist pressure to shorten our stay.